THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) (a) No. Sir. The Government has not come across any case in the recent past where freight forwarding companies were found to be engaged in money laundering by floating bogus firms in different countries.

(b) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Duty draw back frauds by cargo companies

545. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that several cargo clearance companies are indulging in irregularities like overinvoicing of exports to claim huge duty draw back benefits and routing funds through hawala channel in connivance with traders;

(b) whether Government are aware that M/s. Continental Carriers, RZ-293, A-Block, Mahipalpur Extn. and M/s. Skyways, RZ-128, 129-A, Mahipalpur Extn., New Delhi-37 and other such companies are indulging in massive frauds resulting in false duty drawback claims and illegal money laundering activities;

(c) if so, the action being taken against such companies; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) (a) to (d) Instances have come to the notice of the Government where cargo clearance companies have acted in connivance with the exporters to commit irregularities like overinvoicing to claim higher duty drawback benefits. In all such cases, proceedings under the Customs Act of 1962 & Custom House Agents Licensing Regulations, 1984 have been initiated against the cargo clearance companies and the exporter, However, during the recent past, no such cases have been detected against the two companies *viz.*, M/s. Continental Carriers, RZ.293, A-Block, Mahipalpur Extn., and M/s. Skyways, RZ-128, 129-A, Mahipalpur Extn. New Delhi-37.

Revenue collection targets of States

546. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether almost all the States have borrowed double the amounts projected to fund their Ninth Plan share;

(b) if so, the reasons for failure of States to meet revenue collection targets; and

(c) the measures proposed to be taken to look at economy of States for their improvement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALA SAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) As per the assessment made in the Planning Commission, almost all the State Governments have raised substantially higher amounts of borrowings during the Ninth Plan period as against their original Ninth Plan projections. The main reason for these higher borrowings is less revenue collection and higher non-plan revenue expenditure. It is for the State Governments to take corrective measures to increase their revenue collection and reduce their non-plan revenue expenditure. The Government of India, on their part, have, in pursuance of Eleventh Finance Commission's recommendations, created a Fiscal Reforms Facility with an Incentive Fund of Rs. 10607.72 crore. The Medium Term Fiscal Reforms Programme (MTFRP) of twelve States has been approved so far under this Facility and Rs. 1284.89 crore has been released to these States from the Fund. It is up to all States, to draw up Fiscal Reforms Programme, as a solution to their financial crises.

Smuggling of Goods from Neighbouring Countries

547. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the unabated smuggling of Chinese, Nepalese and Bangladeshi goods into the country posing threat to the indigenous manufacturers;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any assessment of the problem and its overall impact on the indigenous producers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what measures have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The case of smuggling of Chinese, Nepalese and Bangladeshi goods into the country detected so far do not indicate any serious threat to the indigenous manufacturers.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.